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TELEGRAM

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S E C R E T SAIGON 2945

E X D I S

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. EMBOFFS SAW TRAN VAN HUONG, PHAN KHAC SUU, AND PHAN QUANG DAN SEPARATELY MORNING OF AUGUST 12 JUST PRIOR TO MEETING OF CANDIDAATES AT DIEN HONG HALL TO DISCUSS THEIR REAACTION TO TUONG LETTER. EMBOFFS STRESSED EFFECT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION OF BICKERING BETWEEN CANDIDATES AND GOVERNMENT, WARNED THAT IF CAMPAING NOT REOPENED SOON THERE MIGHT BE A REVULSION OF AMERICAN OPINION THAT COULD EFFECT OUR WHOLE VIET

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NAM POLICY. EMBOFFS SAID WE ARE NOT DEFENDING GOVERNMENT OR URGING ANY PARTICULAR SOLUTION, BUT IT IS VITAL THAT CANDIDATES AND GOVERNMENT PROMPTLY WORK OUT SOME WAY OF CONDUCTING CAMPAIGN.

2. HUONG RESPONDED
AT
FIRST BY REHASHING THE QUANG TRI INCIDENT
WITH EMPHSIS ON THE VOBSVILB #
SECURITY FOR THE CANDIDATES.
HE EXPRESSED THE FEAR THAT IF THE VIET CONG WOUNDED OR KILLED ONE OF THE CANDIDATES, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BLAMED AND THE EFFECTS ON AMERICN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD BE EVEN

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WORSE. EMBOFF WENT OVER THE GROUND A SECOND TIME. HUONG THEN SAID THAT HE HAS DECIDED THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS HE WILL NOT RPT NOT WITHDRAW FROM THE CAMPAIGN. HE SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS BEST THING TO DO NOW IS TO POSTPONE THE ELECTION TWO OR THREE WEEKS AND START CAMPAIGN ALL OVER, WITH THIEU OR KY ACCOMPANYING THE OTHER CANDIDATES ON ALL VISITS TO THE PROVINCES. HUONG STRESSED UNFAIRNESS OF KY AND THIEU MAKING PROVINCIAL VISITS TO PRESIDE OVER VARIOUS CEREMONIES AS THEY HAVE DONE IN PAST FEW DAYS. EMBOFF DOUBTED THAT POSTPONING ELECTION WOULD PROVE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL CONCERNED, BUT SAID THAT THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET THE TWO PARTIES TOGETHER IN PRIVATE AND FIND A SOLUTION INSTEAD OF SHOUTING

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AT ONE ANOTHER IN PUBLIC.

3. HOUONG THEN OBSERVED THAT IN FACT THE CAMPAIGN IS NOW CONTINUING SINCE THE CAMPAIGN WORKERS OF ALL CANDIDATES ARE STILL ACTIVE THROUGHOUT THE NATION. EMBOFFS RESPONDED THAT THIS IS NOT KNOWN TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, THAT THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO RESTART THE CAMPAIGN AT ONCE. HUONG SAID MANY OTHER CANDIDATES AND MEMBERS OF THE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN TAKING A STRONGER LINE THAN HE, BUT HE WILL TRY TO GET THEM TO SEEK A SOLUTION WHICH WILL RESTART THE CAMPAIGN. EMBOFF NOTED THAT HUONG IS KNOW TO BE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL OF THE CANDIDATES IN THEIR JOINT COUNCIL, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT HUONG WILL TRY HARD TO END THE FIGHT WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND GET BACK ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL.

4. PHAN KHAC SUU TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE BELIEVES THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE RESUMED NEXT WEEK. HE REGARDS THE SQUABBLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AS A MINOR MATTER. SUU ALSO COMMENTED THAT HE WAS GIVEN EXCELLENT TREATMENT WHILE IN HUE. WHILE EMBOFF

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WAS STILL IN HIS OFFICE, SUU GOT A CALL FROM I CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL LAM. SUU THANKED LAM FOR HIS HELP DURING SUU'S VISIT TO I CORPS, AND SUU PARTICULARLY NOTED THAT IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO KEEP THE PUBLIC AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC MEETINGS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN HUE. SUU COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT THE MAIN TROUBLEMAKER IS TRAN VAN HUONG WHO WANTS TO MAKE AS MUCH AS HE CAN OUT OF THE QUANG TRI INCIDENT.

5. DR. PHAN QUANG DAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAS GONE AS FAR AS HE WILL WITH THE OTHER CANDIDATES IN EXPLOITING THE QUANT TRI INCIDENT. HE NOW WANTS TO REOPEN THE CAMPAIGN. DAN CLAIMS THAT SEMON OSH CANDIDATES, INCLUDING DZU (WHO HAS BEEN ONE OF THE LEADERS IN THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN), ALSO WANT TO GET CAMPAIGN UNDER WAY AGAIN. THE CANDIDATES EXPECT TO GO AHEAD WITH THE SCHEDULED JOINT PRESS CONDERENCE ON MONDAY, AUGUST 14, AND DR. DAN THINKSTHE VISITS TO THE PROVINCES WILL BE RESUMED AUGUST 15.

6. THE CANDIATES ARE NOW MEETING AT DIEN HONG HALL AND THE PRESS IS THERE IN DROVES.

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7. COMMENT (A) BOTH DR. DAN AND NGUYEN VAN NGAI TOLD US THAT THE MEETING TODAY WAS ORIGINALLY SLATED TO BE HELD AT THE XA LOI PAGODA. XA LOI WAS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE 1963 "STRUGGLE" AGAINST DIEM, AND MAI THO TRUYEN (WHO RUNS XA LOI VIRTUALLY AS HIS PRIVATE PROPERTY) WAS A PRINCIPAL LEADER IN THAT "STRUGGLE". DESPITE HUNG'S COMMENTS TO EMBOFF, WE ARE NOT SURE THAT HUONG AND TRUYEN ARE NOT THINKING IN "STRUGGLE" TERMS. IF SO, THEY MAY TAKE LITTLE HEED OF OUR WARNINGS ABOUT AMERICAN OPINION. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT THE OTHER CANDIDATES MAY BE READY TO RESUME THE CAMPAING, IN WHICH CASE HUONG AND TRUYEN MAY BE CARRIED ALONG. (B) WE WILL BE IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH THIS SITUATION AND WILL REPORT INFORMATION AS WE GET IT.

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